

THE  
BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL  
JOURNAL.

VOL. X.]

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 1834.

[NO. 19.]

CONTRIBUTIONS ON MIDWIFERY.

BY THOMAS BRADFORD, SURGEON EXTRAORDINARY TO THE MANCHESTER LYING-IN  
HOSPITAL, ETC. ETC.

*On the Injury which the Head of the Child sometimes sustains in its  
passage through the Pelvis.*

THE injuries which the head of the child sustains during its passage through the pelvis in protracted labors, are very numerous. But that which is more particularly considered in the following remarks, is what is technically called the "mould shot head."

When the head enters a narrow pelvis, and its occipito-frontal diameter corresponds with the oblique or the transverse of this cavity, and it is propelled through it by the unaided natural powers, an alteration in its figure is produced. The occipito-frontal diameter is considerably increased, whilst the conjugate is in an equal degree diminished. The same change in shape is observed in the head when it is long detained at the outlet of the pelvis, in consequence of rigidity of the soft parts. The brain bears this alteration in the figure of the cranium with comparative little inconvenience, because the pressure it sustains is parallel with the fibres of some of those parts which lie between the two hemispheres, and with the falx, which in its natural state supports this organ. The pressure is also less injurious, because it is applied upon the sides of the vessels, but not in such a degree as considerably to influence their calibres.

The figure of the "mould shot head" is very different from the one just described. It is very considerably increased from the base to the crown, and diminished in its occipito-frontal diameter. It does not take place in all cases of protracted labor, but only in such as are produced by a malposition of the fetal head. It sometimes occurs when pressure is artificially applied in the same direction.

When the head presents with its long diameter lying parallel with the short one of the superior aperture of the pelvis, the occiput may be situated towards the pubes, or towards the sacrum. In both cases the labor is slow and difficult, even if the pelvis is well-formed; but if, along with an unfavorable position, the pelvis be narrow, or if the head is larger than ordinary, the difficulties are considerably increased. In this presentation the alteration which takes place in the head is as follows:—a considerable diminution in the length of the occipito-frontal diameter is produced, in consequence of approximation between the frontal and occipital bones, the fontanelles become nearly obliterated, the parietal bones are forcibly separated, and the sagittal suture is wider and more prominent. The

brain is pushed into this space, which is insufficient for its accommodation, its organization is injured, and the child, when born, is either dead, or dies soon after birth.

Injuries of a similar character are sometimes met with, when the long forceps have been used. This mischief will inevitably occur if the obstetrician has no regard to the kind of instrument he uses, or to the degree of pressure he applies. If the head is forcibly and rapidly dragged through the pelvis, regardless of the axis, instead of waiting for that moulding of the bones which nature adopts when left to herself, effects of the most serious nature are produced upon both the mother and child. In all instrumental labors, when the head presents naturally, the pains, however trifling, if attended to, have a tendency to effect those salutary changes in the cranial bones whereby the delivery is accomplished more successfully. But if the instruments are brought into their full action, the tendency of these feeble efforts will be completely overcome.

Children, whose heads have suffered pressure in the direction of the occipito-frontal diameter, are frequently born dead, or they die soon after birth, unless the case is properly considered. They are unable to effectually commence the important function of respiration. The lungs are only partially filled with air by the convulsive sobs which take place. The action of the heart is not free; and if the pulsations in the funis continue, they are labored and oppressed. The countenance is turgid, and of a livid color, and the vessels of the conjunctiva are quite injected with blood. These symptoms fully prove, that the difficulty to commence respiration does not depend upon a mechanical obstruction from mucus in the trachea, but on the injury which the brain has suffered. This organ is in a state of apoplexy, sometimes depending on a very highly congested state of the bloodvessels alone, sometimes on an effusion of blood, which takes place in different parts of the brain, and also varies in quantity. This opinion is corroborated by dissection, and the appearance discovered will be best understood by detailing a case or two.

CASE I.—I opened the head of a child which was born with the symptoms already mentioned, and lived twenty minutes. A considerable quantity of extravasated blood was found upon each hemisphere, between the pia mater and the tunica arachnoidea, and at the base of the brain upon the dura mater. The superficial vessels were universally gorged with blood. Those of the plexus choroides were very turgid.

CASE II.—Upon opening a child born dead, after a protracted labor, in which the long forceps had been applied, on account of distortion at the brim of the pelvis, I found a considerable quantity of coagulated blood upon the left hemisphere of the brain, and also upon and under the cerebellum. The structure of the brain was much softer than natural. The vessels upon the surface were very full. Upon opening the ventricles, a clot of a flattened shape was seen in the left. These serious effects are produced by the brain being compressed in a direction contrary to the course of the fibres of some of those parts which lie between the hemispheres, and also to the current of blood along the longitudinal sinus.

The pressure, applied to the fore and hind part of the head, has a tendency to change the relative situation of many parts of the brain. It

forces one hemisphere from the other, which, if carried beyond a certain degree, will inevitably produce laceration of the coats of the veins, which pass to the longitudinal sinus ; and this danger is increased by the great congestion which exists.

The practice to be adopted, is to bleed freely as soon as possible after the child is born. The funis ought to be divided before it has ceased to pulsate, as no blood can be obtained if this be neglected. If the pulsations in the vessels of the funis have ceased, two leeches must be applied to the temples.

If these means have not been adopted, convulsions generally ensue, as happened in the two following cases, the first of which I am indebted for the particulars to my esteemed friend and partner Mr. Hunt, and I shall cite it in his own words.

CASE III.—“ In a case of difficult labor, which I attended last December, in conjunction with Mr. Greaves, one of the surgeons of the Lying-In Hospital, and which happened to a female suffering so much from contraction of the brim of the pelvis, as to induce the surgeon, who had attended at her preceding labor, to have recourse to embryotomy, the long forceps, with blades of equal length, were successfully employed, although very considerable difficulty was experienced in applying them. The child's head was not only very much lengthened, but also distorted at the right parietal region, in consequence of the pressure occasioned by the combined action of the contracted pelvic bones and the blades of the forceps. The face was tumefied and dark-colored, and respiration oppressed. It was then thought desirable to allow some blood to flow from the funis, but as this was not divided until its pulsations had ceased, although no ligature was applied, no bleeding of the fœtal portion followed. Next day the child continued to suffer from the state of the head, and had two convulsions ; a leech was applied to each temple, gentle aperients ordered, and the child gradually recovered.”

CASE IV.—I was requested by Mr. Dick to visit a poor woman in New Blakely street, who was suffering from protracted labor, caused by contraction of the brim of the pelvis. The long forceps were applied, and the child delivered alive. A depression of considerable size was produced on the left parietal bone, from the pressure it had sustained from the promontory of the sacrum. The signs which the child manifested were those of apoplexy. The funis was divided, but no blood followed, as the pulsation had previously ceased. The child continued in the same state during the day, and in the evening was attacked with convulsions, which were frequent. Two leeches were applied to the temples, the bowels were opened, and the child recovered.

*London Medical and Surgical Journal.*

---

#### LANQUE'S REMEDY FOR SWOLLEN BREASTS.

EVERYTHING which can add to our knowledge concerning the best means to be adopted in cases where the mammary glands become swollen, painful, and indurated, in consequence of the child being taken from the breast, and the discharge of the milk by the natural outlet ceasing,

must be thankfully received. Doctor Schnur has made an interesting communication on this subject. He was struck by some observations made by Ranque (Froriep's Notizen), and determined to try the remedy he recommended.

The swelling of the breast which precedes the formation of mammary abscess, is caused in the first instance by the retention of the milk and the consequent distention of the lactiferous ducts. But this is not the only cause of the local derangement that so speedily follows, for the vascular system of the mammae is wonderfully increased preparatory to and during lactation, and, therefore, when this augmented circulation of the breasts is baffled in the performance of its proper function, the secretion of milk, it often tends to form with great rapidity vicarious and unhealthy products. Hence arises the obstinacy of many such cases, and hence they are frequently not found to be amenable to the common methods of treating local congestions or inflammations. All practical men are consequently obliged to adopt various methods of treatment, and the skilful accoucheur is often enabled by attention and pains to save his patient from the suffering accompanying such affections. Ranque, impressed with certain theoretical ideas which it is unnecessary here to discuss, was led to the use of the following liniment :—

R. Extracti Belladonnæ, ℥ii.  
Aque Laurocerasi, ℥ii.  
Ætheris Sulphurici, ℥i.  
Ft. Linimentum.

This must be well shaken before it is used. It is to be rubbed into the breasts as high as the axillæ, morning and evening, and the breast must be then covered with fine flannel soaked in the liniment. This proceeding must be repeated every day, until the swelling disappears, which is usually on the second or third day. The æther has a smell which to some is very disagreeable, but they ought to bear this inconvenience if possible, for it adds essentially to the efficacy of the remedy. The subject is of such great importance, that, at risk of being tedious, I shall give the whole of what Dr. Schnur says on the following cases :—

“E. M. a Jewess, short and slender, was married when thirteen years old to a husband aged fourteen. Immediately after marriage she became subject to hysteria, and the catamenia grew irregular. On the third year after her marriage she became pregnant, and, arriving at her full time, was delivered of a small but healthy child. She persisted in attempting to nurse the infant, although her breasts were ill developed, and her general health far too weakly to authorize the attempt. Six hours after its birth the infant was applied to the breast, when she experienced flying stitches darting through them, which soon amounted to positive and considerable pain. The circumference of the mammae now increased in size, and in twenty-four hours it was found impossible to extract a drop of milk from them, either by rubbing, pressing, or drawing them. The breasts had lost their proper elastic feel, their surface did not yield to the pressure of the finger, neither was it hot or red, but

like the rest of the skin, it was quite white and blanched ; her feet were cold, tongue clean, and bowels gently opened by a saline aperient. The patient tossed about in her bed, and the pain in the breasts was so excessive as to cause her to rave and faint. Her pulse was small, frequent, and contracted, and she was affected with constriction of the chest, and spasms of the muscles of the neck. Before my arrival the attendants had tried inunction with almond oil, the application of bags containing dried herbs warm, fomentations of chamomile, &c., and were just going to apply a poultice of linseed meal. Under these circumstances there appeared to be an urgent necessity for calming the general nervous irritation, and diminishing the pain felt in the breasts. To effect these purposes nothing appeared better calculated than Ranque's liniment, and I, therefore, caused it to be applied in my presence. After the flannel had been on one hour, the skin of the breasts became slightly red, and the patient expressed considerable relief. The tendency to fainting now vanished, and the pulse lost its irritable contracted stroke ; nevertheless she complained of the smell of the æther, which, she said, gave her headache, and I consequently substituted alcohol in its place. With the diminution of pain, the hardness of the breasts likewise subsided, and in forty-eight hours all traces of this local affection had vanished.

"In two other somewhat similar cases, Ranque's liniment produced the most beneficial effects, although not so rapidly as in that just related. In both the smell of æther was complained of, but I persevered in its use, being convinced that it contributes much to the efficacy of the remedy in causing that redness of the skin, which seems essential to its action. Although these cases prove that this remedy possesses considerable power, I by no means wish to assert that it is applicable to all cases, or that its success is invariable ; on the contrary, I am sure that the kind of cases to which it is applicable are not very numerous, for it must be recollected that in plethoric robust women, who have enjoyed a good state of health previously to delivery, antiphlogistic and derivative remedies, such as purgatives, are indispensably necessary, and when administered in proper time they have the best effect, often, although not invariably, enabling us to prevent the formation of abscesses or of induration of the mammæ. It is in delicate women, of a lean habit and slender form, subject to hysteria or fainting ; persons whose constitutions have been injured by previous illness, hemorrhage after delivery, or by too frequent child-bearing ; it is in such persons that Ranque's liniment will be found useful. Its composition, indeed, consisting of narcotics, combined with stimulants, seems to point out the nature of the cases in which it may prove serviceable."—*Dublin Journal*.

# ON THE PROPERTIES AND PROXIMATE PRINCIPLES OF THE ERGOT (*Acinula Clavus*, of Fries).

BY CHARLES HOOKER, M.D. OF NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

FEW articles of the *Materia Medica* have occasioned greater diversity of opinion than the Ergot. Since this article was first recommended to the attention of the profession by our learned countryman, John Stearns, M.D., now of the city of New York, and formerly President of the New York State Medical Society, most writers have coincided with regard to its efficacy in increasing the parturient efforts of the uterus—some, however, have denounced the article as dangerous both to the mother and child; while others have discarded it as entirely destitute of medicinal powers.

Having become satisfied, from experience, of the valuable properties of the article, though I had witnessed several cases of its deleterious narcotic effects on the child, I made some experiments, in the autumn of 1831, for the purpose of ascertaining the active principle of the medicine, and of obtaining a convenient form for administration.

A quantity of pulverized ergot was macerated, for several days, in sulphuric ether; the liquid was then evaporated in a glass vessel, until it no longer afforded the smell of ether. There remained at the bottom of the vessel a small quantity of thick heavy oil, resembling in appearance fish oil: above this was a lighter oil, much more abundant than the former, of a light reddish-brown color, and of a sweetish nauseous taste.

In order to ascertain whether this *light oil* contained the active medicinal principle, I cautiously administered it in six successive cases of parturition. The results were summarily as follows. In the first case twenty drops were administered, thirty minutes before the birth of the child. In the second case thirty drops were administered—the child was born after an interval of an hour and a quarter. Third case, forty drops—child born within thirty minutes.

In neither of these cases did the medicine appear to accelerate the labor, or to produce any effect either on the mother or child.

In the fourth case, fifty drops were administered; and the child was born after an interval of about forty minutes. Within about fifteen minutes after taking the oil, the woman complained of a strange sensation in the head, which she attributed to the medicine. No other effect was observed, which appeared like the operation of ergot.

In the fifth case, the child was born forty minutes after the administration of sixty-five drops of the oil; and, in the sixth case, the child was born sixty minutes after the administration of seventy-five drops. These were both easy labors; but the children, for a considerable time after birth, had a livid appearance, and respired with much difficulty and irregularity, with the ordinary appearance of ergotism.

In neither of these six cases, did the medicine appear to have the least effect in increasing the uterine contraction.

Being apprehensive, from these trials, that this oil possessed dangerous

go back. many leaves —



narcotic properties, without the power of increasing uterine contraction, I next proceeded to use the ergot which had been deprived of its oils by maceration in ether. Thus deprived of its oils, the ergot was found to have lost much of its weight, and to have become nearly destitute of taste.

This substance was administered in about twelve successive cases of parturition—the quantity given in each case being, in size, equal to from twelve to thirty grains of ergot not deprived of its oils. Its operation was found very prompt in increasing uterine contraction and accelerating labor; and in no case did the child manifest the least symptoms of ergotism, but exhibited a healthy color, and breathed and cried well, immediately after delivery.

These results led me to the conclusion, which I by no means anticipated at the commencement of my experiments, that the power which ergot possesses of increasing uterine contraction, depends on a different proximate principle from that which causes unpleasant, and, in some cases, fatal narcotic effects.

In the winter of 1831–2, these results were stated to my student, Mr. D. H. Moore (now Dr. Moore of this city), and by him communicated, in his inaugural dissertation, to the committee of examination in the Medical Institution of Yale College.

This gentleman, at my suggestion, administered the light oil, above mentioned, to some of his fellow students, with results which unequivocally proved its narcotic powers. Since that time I have witnessed the effects of this oil on several young men, students in my office; and the results observed by Dr. Moore and myself, were so similar in the different cases, that it will be sufficient to particularize one case.

Mr. H. A. D., aged 19, commonly not easily affected by narcotics, took two and a half fluid drachms of this oil in the course of one afternoon, in August 1833. He first took 3 ss., at 2 o'clock, just after eating a full meal. His pulse was now 82 in a minute—respiration 19. Within seven minutes he felt a rather agreeable sensation in the head, such, he said, as he had sometimes experienced after taking sulphuric ether. I now took him with me, in a gig, about a mile, to see a patient. This agreeable sensation in the head soon disappeared, and was succeeded by an unpleasant, heavy, confused feeling, particularly in the posterior part of the head. Half an hour after taking the oil, he complained, while riding, of sensations similar to those attending sea-sickness. This heavy confused feeling in the head alternated frequently with a disagreeable sensation resembling nausea. The latter sensation, he remarked, appeared to be not in the stomach, but rather posterior to, and above the stomach—probably in the pneumo-gastric nerves. There was at this time a general languor and lassitude, and a constant inclination to spit. At the expiration of forty-five minutes, the disagreeable sensation alternating between the head and the region of the stomach, with the general languor and lassitude, became extremely unpleasant. He complained also of observing frequent flashes of light in the eyes, which induced him once to inquire whether it lightened.

At 3 o'clock he took 3j. of the oil. This, like the first dose, within about seven minutes, was succeeded by an agreeable sensation in the

head, and a slight general exhilaration, during the continuance of which all of the unpleasant sensations, above mentioned, disappeared. The latter sensations, however, soon returned, with additional severity. He now walked with me about forty rods, to visit a patient; I hurried home, however, apprehensive that the appearance of my student would cause suspicions of intoxication. He complained of a rather painful rigidity of the muscles, and an extreme lassitude in the lower extremities, which caused considerable difficulty in walking; the skin generally had a rather livid color; the pupils were dilated; and the countenance had a remarkably heavy idiotic expression. On returning home, forty minutes after taking the last dose, the pulse was diminished in frequency to 65—respiration 14.

At 4 o'clock he took another dose of 3j. Like the former doses, this produced a transient slight exhilaration, succeeded by the unpleasant sensations in the head and the region of the stomach. At 5 o'clock the pulse was 36, slow and feeble—respiration 8, slow and small. The capillary action in the skin was remarkably slow—a portion of the skin deprived of its blood, by pressure with the finger, being a long time in recovering its color. From about the time of taking the second dose, he had frequent and pretty copious discharges of urine. He had considerable difficulty in walking about half a mile to his lodgings, on account of the extreme general languor and lassitude, a confusion in the head, and the painful rigidity of the muscles of the extremities.

Feeling unable to keep awake, he retired early, and slept very sound through the night.

On the following afternoon, Mr. A. B. W. aged 20, easily affected by narcotics, took forty minims of the light oil of ergot at a dose. The effects were almost precisely the same as in the former case—this subject, owing to an extreme susceptibility to the action of narcotics, being affected by a much less quantity of the oil.

It may be remarked, that, in order to avoid any influence of the imagination, neither of these young men was informed of the nature of the substance taken, or of the expected operative effects.

In these two young men, the effects of ergotism continued apparent nearly a week—the pupils of the eye being dilated; the pulse and respiration very small and infrequent; the capillary action very slow; and the skin livid; with a loss of appetite, a general languor and lassitude, and a rigidity and soreness of the muscles—the muscles of the thighs, and other parts of the lower extremities, being more particularly affected. For three days the frequency of the pulse continued below 50, with a proportionate infrequency of the respiration.

With a view to observe the effects of the *simple infusion of the ergot*, I administered to two other young gentlemen a quantity of the infusion prepared by digesting two ounces of the pulverized ergot in a pint of water, a few degrees below the boiling temperature. Mr. J. M. H. took fourteen ounces, and Mr. J. C. N. eight ounces, in doses of two ounces, in the course of about two hours, commencing at 3 o'clock, P. M. The effects were similar in the two cases. Both experienced a transient slight nausea, directly after taking each dose, which they attributed simply to the taste. A very slight dilatation of the pupils was



observed ; but there was no headache, no retardation of the respiration, pulse or capillary circulation ; no change in the color of the skin, and none of the general languor, lassitude and drowsiness, with which the other young gentlemen were affected after taking the oil. Instead of a depressing operation on any part of the system, the prominent effect observed was a considerable degree of exhilaration, with preternatural wakefulness—both of them lying awake, with a very pleasurable train of sensations and thoughts, through nearly the whole succeeding night. Mr. N. had formerly taken a quantity of the light oil above mentioned ; and he observed that the contrast, between the operation of the infusion and the oil, was very striking. About two hours after taking the last dose of the infusion, he experienced a slight transient spasmodic rigidity of the muscles of one thigh—perhaps an effect of the imagination and a recollection of the former operation of the oil. He was unable to take as large a quantity of the infusion as Mr. H., remarking, after taking the fourth dose, that the taste, associated with a recollection of the former nauseous operation of the oil, forbade his stomach receiving any more.

It being ascertained, as above stated, by my own experiments and those of Dr. Moore, in the early part of 1832, that the light oil of the ergot possessed active narcotic powers ; and also that the ergot deprived of its oils, by maceration in ether, retained the property of increasing uterine contraction ; it occurred to me that a *simple infusion of the ergot might be administered without danger of any deleterious operation*. From that time, now more than two years, I have constantly given the ergot in this form, being cautious to have none of the sediment mixed with the infusion ; and, though I have administered the article with the happiest effects in numerous cases, I have in no case seen any narcotic effects either on the mother or child.

I am authorized to state, also, that Dr. Beers, the Professor of Obstetrics in Yale College, in his extensive practice has very frequently during this period employed the ergot in this form, with the satisfaction of witnessing no unpleasant operation in any case. Before this period he had commonly given the sediment with the infusion, and had frequently witnessed its narcotic operation both on mothers and children—indeed, he had commonly observed the child affected more or less with asphyxia, when the labor had been protracted more than forty or fifty minutes after the exhibition of the ergot.

Dr. Lyman Parker, of Wallingford, a gentleman of much obstetrical experience, informed me, some time since, that he had made frequent use of the ergot, and had been perfectly incredulous with regard to its possessing any deleterious property. On inquiry concerning his mode of administration, he stated that he had always employed the article in infusion, carefully avoiding the sediment. On the contrary, in conversing with several medical friends, who had acquired a strong prejudice against the ergot, I learned that they had given the substance in powder, or the infusion together with the sediment.

I find also, on referring to different authors who have engaged in the discussion concerning the ergot, that those who consider the article as safe in its operation, commonly exhibit the clear infusion ; while those who denounce the article as dangerous, commonly give the substance in

powder, or a very strong infusion or decoction in large quantities—in which cases it is not improbable that little care has been observed to avoid giving some portion of the sediment with the infusion or decoction. Probably, too, by decoction a considerable portion of the narcotic oil would be extracted.

This circumstance, of the different doses and modes of administration, will probably account, in part, for the great discrepancy of opinion which has prevailed with regard to the ergot.

Another circumstance, also, I observed in the course of my experiments—that *the properties of different specimens of ergot, found in the shops, are extremely various*. Some specimens I found to afford a very large quantity of the above described narcotic oil—the oils constituting one-half, or two-thirds, of the whole weight of the ergot; while other specimens yielded but a very moderate quantity of oil.

I observed, too, that the ectolic powers of the ergot were not at all in proportion to the quantity of oil contained. One specimen, which contained a very large proportion of the narcotic oil, I administered in infusion, in several cases of parturition, without the least apparent effect in increasing uterine contraction.

This great difference in the quality of ergot will, perhaps, explain the cases recorded by some rash practitioners, in which very large quantities of ergot have been administered without injurious effects. One case is recorded in which a practitioner states that he gave about a quarter of a pound in the course of one night, with no apparent effect. From my experiments, I have no doubt that such a quantity of some ergot found in the shops, would have proved fatal to both mother and child.

This difference in the quality of ergot, probably gave rise to the opinion, which has prevailed, that ergot loses its properties by age. This opinion, which has been amply refuted by the communications of Dr. E. Woodward and Dr. R. Hazeltine, in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, I have long known to be incorrect—having witnessed prompt and salutary effects from ergot which had been kept in powder from six to twelve months.

A notice has been recently published, in several of the periodicals, that M. Boettcher, of Europe, from some experiments, has come to the conclusion that the quality of ergot varies according to the time it is gathered—that “the action of the ergot of rye collected before harvest is very energetic, while that collected after harvest is totally powerless.” Of the correctness of this conclusion I have had no means to decide, as the ergot rarely grows in any considerable quantity in this vicinity, and I have depended on the shops for a supply, and consequently have not known at what time it was gathered.

The periodicals, a few months since, contained also an abstract of a chemical analysis of ergot, made in Europe, which is subjoined.

“In 103 parts of ergot, M. Wiggers, of Berlin, has found—White oily matter, 35.0; Solid fatty matter, crystallizable, and of peculiar nature, 1.04; Cerine, 0.75; Fungous matter, 46.08; Ergotine, 1.24; Vegetable ozimazome, 7.76; Sugar, 1.55; Gummy extract, with red coloring principle, 2.32; Vegetable albumen, 1.48; Acid phosphate of

potash, 4.42; Phosphate of lime, and traces of iron, 0.28; Silica, 0.14. There are some remarkable points in the preceding analysis. In the first place the presence of vegetable ozmazome identifies the ergot with the class of mushrooms, in which this substance forms a considerable proportion. In this ozmazome seems to reside the power which promotes parturition. The ergotine is insoluble in water, and seems, from the experiments of M. Wiggers, to be the principle in which the poisonous qualities of the ergot reside. On several animals it has operated as a powerful irritant poison, while the ozmazome produced no such effect."

If vegetable ozmazome is soluble both in ether and water (and I believe that chemists consider this a property of that substance), I am disposed to doubt the conclusion of M. Wiggers, that "In this ozmazome seems to reside the power which promotes parturition"; for I found that ergot, which had been thoroughly macerated in ether, still retained this power.

But in the most important practical result, it appears that we coincide—that "*the principle in which the poisonous qualities of the ergot reside . . . . . is insoluble in water.*" If these poisonous qualities reside in the principle which he supposes, it would seem that in my experiments the ergotine remained in solution in the light oil.

In conclusion, I would enjoin the two following rules for the mode of exhibiting the ergot in cases of parturition—not adverting to the cases, or particular symptoms, which indicate its use—subjects already ably treated of by different writers.

1. *The ergot should always be exhibited in the form of a watery infusion.*

2. *A large quantity should not be exhibited in any case—the infusion of twenty-five or thirty grains, in divided doses, being abundantly sufficient.*

Unless the latter rule is observed, the practitioner will occasionally observe a narcotic operation; for some portion of the powder will commonly remain suspended in the infusion, and, if a large quantity is prescribed, this may be sufficient to occasion unpleasant narcotic effects. I have found, moreover, that if an increase of uterine contraction was not produced by this quantity of the ergot, no advantage was gained by the exhibition of a greater quantity—indeed, it has appeared to me that, in general, a very large quantity of ergot is less efficient in producing uterine contraction, than a less quantity; the narcotic operation of the ergot, like that of opium, when administered with ergot, appearing to counteract its favorable operation.

May 27, 1834.

---

---

**BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.**


---



---

 BOSTON, JUNE 18, 1834.
 

---

**COTTON FOR DRESSING.**

THE following observations on the advantage of carded cotton, as a substitute for lint in the dressing of wounds, we obtain from a French medical journal. The use of cotton has principally obtained among us, for the dressing of extensive suppurating surfaces, as those arising from burns, but we see no reason why its employment should not be extended to many of those cases in which lint, a much more expensive article, is now resorted to.

"On more than one occasion the attempt has been made to replace lint in the dressing of wounds, by a substance more easy of access, of a less price, and less susceptible of acquiring injuries. We have already in this journal directed the attention of surgeons and of the managers of hospitals to the charpie of hemp, the use of which ought already to have been more general in the army and in temporary hospitals. We shall now attempt to describe the properties of cotton as a dressing. Cotton, which like lint is a vegetable substance, has the advantage of being lighter, and is so abundant as to be sold at a very low price. It is easily applied, without previous preparation, in thin and equal flakes. By doubling the usual flake, we obtain at pleasure two soft surfaces, like the English lint, and which may be applied to the same uses as this tissue. Once in place, the cotton is not subject to disturbance, and remains attached on wounds and ulcers, even of the face, without its being necessary to sustain it by means of bandages or plasters. Lastly, it has more elasticity than lint, and preserves this precious property in a variety of circumstances, and even when it becomes damp. It is indeed objected to it, that like wool, it is full of points and motes, which render it irritant and injurious; but by applying a few filaments of it under the eyelids, on a fresh wound, a burn, or blister, it will easily be seen what becomes of these asperities. The opposite objection has also been made, namely, that the cotton did not excite granulations, but produced an imperfect pus, by furnishing an insufficient stimulus. This objection is as ill founded as the last; and to be convinced of it, we need only try a few experiments, which are equally free from expense and from danger.

"In regard to economy, a simple comparison of the relative prices of lint and of cotton will make this truth evident. Fine lint for equal weight costs more than cotton of prime quality; but the difference in volume is such, in consequence of the specific levity of the latter, that a quarter of a pound of the one equals a pound of the other, and that with equal weights the cotton will cover a surface four or five times more considerable than the other. Still more, cotton being applicable to a variety of purposes, and capable of being cleansed perfectly by chemical processes, that which has already served for dressings will command a considerable proportion of its former price, which cannot be said of lint."

These remarks, if well founded, ought in a peculiar manner to recommend cotton to the employment of the American practitioner, with whom

it possesses the additional advantage of being of native growth. The finest quality of Southern cotton could hardly fail, we should suppose, to afford a substance equal, if not superior in every valuable quality, to imported lint, and can be produced at a price which, in the large proportion of cases, would be wholly insignificant. We recommend this matter to the consideration of the directors of our hospitals.

---

#### CAUSES AND CURE OF APHTHÆ IN INFANTS.

ROZES, in his treatise on the diseases, assigns as one cause of the aphthous eruption in children, the habit in which some nurses indulge of allowing children to fall asleep with the nipple in their mouths. In this case, he observes, a part of the milk becomes acid, and by its irritation produces the aphthæ.

In whatever manner the aphthæ have been developed, their presence is recognized by the appearance of the eruption, if in the mouth; if lower down, by a collection of characteristic symptoms. The features are contracted; the mouth burning, so as to render it difficult to take the breast or to retain it when taken; there is vomiting, hiccup, and agitation; and finally, when the aphthæ have reached the digestive tube, assimilation becomes difficult or nearly impossible, and a white grumous discharge, resembling curdled milk, shows that the milk is incapable of arriving at the second passages. In these circumstances, to the evil produced by the aphthæ, is joined the evil of hunger; there is then no time to be lost, and death is inevitable if we do not succeed in re-opening the passages for the transmission of chyle, by curing the aphthæ which obstruct their orifices.

In this disease, as in all others, prevention is better than cure. The means are not difficult of execution, provided the nurse is intelligent: it consists in removing from the mouth of the infant the remains of milk, or the mucus which may have lodged in it, and then washing it out with a decoction of mallows, or an infusion of rosemary. The process of doing this little operation consists in dipping a bit of linen in the infusion, twisting this round the end of the finger, and moving it gently over all the points of the interior of the mouth. Besides this precaution, it is proper to keep the infant dry, and to furnish it with the best nourishment.

---

#### OCTAGON PHIALS FOR EXTERNALS.

AN English writer, after commenting on the numerous accidents that occur from the swallowing medicines in mistake, that were designed for external use or for other purposes, and particularly on the recent narrow escape of the Earl of Westmoreland from the consequences of such an error, recommends that physicians and apothecaries use octagon phials to send out laudanum, liniments, embrocations, and other articles prescribed for outward application. Some of these phials might be cast with the word "laudanum" on them, and others with the words "only for outward use." Thus would all danger of mistake be removed, since the bear feel of the phial in a dark room would show that it did not contain a draught or mixture intended to be swallowed. This suggestion is an excellent one, and we hope it may be adopted in this country. Its adoption, to be effectual, must be general, and it can only be general when done under the sanction and authority of medical and pharmaceutical societies.

## TREATMENT OF CHOLERA BY CAPSICUM.

EVERYTHING touching the successful treatment of the cholera ought to be upon medical record. We find by the Courier and Journal published at Natchez, Miss., that certain citizens of Pine Ridge, Adams Co., Miss., have presented a beautiful silver vase of six hundred dollars cost, to Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright of that place, as a token of gratitude for his successful efforts in the treatment of this malady. Engraven on this vase is the following splendid memento, "In 361 cases, no deaths." After receiving the vase, Dr. C. addressed the committee to the following effect :

GENTLEMEN :—I accept this splendid and costly present, and tender to each of you individually, and to all the persons of the late public meeting on Pine Ridge, who have contributed in any manner towards conferring on me so distinguished, yet unmerited an honor, my most sincere thanks. I cannot disguise the fact that this testimonial of your friendship affords me inexpressible pleasure. The consciousness of having discharged, to the best of my poor ability, my professional duties to those who have confided in me, was to me a source of pleasure sufficient in itself to compensate me for the "jeers" of those who differ with me in opinion, and to enable me to encounter "the prejudices of the age." That pleasure is, however, increased, by knowing that those duties have been discharged in a manner to meet your approbation, and particularly that you have found the measure and means I ultimately adopted and publicly advised you to pursue against that dread pestilence, the cholera, to be of general efficacy. The reception now from your hands of this magnificent memento of your friendship, on which I see engraven your evidence of the successful treatment of cholera by the means I advised, is to me truly a source of much pleasure, and for which I am incompetent to express, in as warm a manner as I feel, my sincere thanks. But, gentlemen, however great may be my satisfaction in possessing this vase, the unsought, unbought pledge of your friendship, and of transmitting it to my posterity in remembrance of you and of me, my satisfaction would be incomplete did I not anticipate other and higher advantages to be derived from it. The cholera, gentlemen, has again appeared in many parts of the country around us. I have tried the same plan which proved so successful last year, and have found it to be equally successful again. This, with the information of its efficacy from different persons and places, afford me good ground of hope, that the beneficent Author of our being has so ordered it, that this pestilence, in the generality of cases, shall by the same means be disarmed of much of its terrors, whenever and wherever it may appear. I anticipate, gentlemen, your voluntary testimony, thus so decidedly and unequivocally expressed in behalf of the remedies and measures you have found so successful, will encourage others, far and near, particularly those who reside remote from medical assistance, to give these remedies a fair trial in cholera, and avail themselves of whatever advantages they possess. So many nostrums and ineffectual means for cholera have been trumpeted forth to the world as cures for this disease, even by the learned and humane, but especially by the ignorant and avaricious, that the public have become incredulous and require other and stronger testimony than the *ipse dixit* of any one individual. You, gentlemen, who have no medical theories to support, no medical prejudices to mislead you, no purposes to accomplish nor ambitious ends in view,



other than the good of your fellow-men, can bear witness to the world that out of more than 300 cases of cholera, in your neighborhood, the disease was vanquished by attacking it in its incipient stage by a combination of camphor, calomel and cayenne pepper, and that none died.

Many of these cases you know had passed the incipient stages, and besides, rice-water operations were attended with vomiting and cramps. You likewise can bear witness that the removal of slaves even but a few hundred yards into the open fields, and there erecting shelters, is a safe and effectual measure to arrest the progress of the disease.

Yes, gentlemen, you can bear witness what has prevented the extension and continuance of the cholera when it occurred on your plantations; and what has prevented the disease when it did occur, from terminating in collapse and death. Many highly respectable physicians, as well as citizens, not only in Natchez and the surrounding country, but in other parts of Mississippi and Louisiana, have also experienced the benefit of the treatment for cholera, that proved so successful on Pine Ridge.

The establishment of the fact beyond cavil that cholera can be arrested among negroes by removing into the open cotton fields, and that a combination of calomel, camphor and capsicum, will almost always cure the disease in its early stage, is not only of vast importance to planters, but worth the serious consideration of all medical men, who place more reliance on facts than theories; who grasp the substance rather than the shadow, and who have not forgot that the chief end and aim of medical science is to prevent diseases and to cure them. Hoping, therefore, gentlemen, that your munificence to me, an individual by no means worthy of such distinguished regard, and whom you have always amply rewarded for his professional services, will ultimately have the effect of benefiting the public, I accept with increased satisfaction this assurance of your friendship, and this evidence of the success of the treatment I advised you to pursue when your neighborhood was afflicted with the cholera.

---

*Herpes.*—In a case of herpes in a female, at present in the Westminster Hospital, Mr. Guthrie has employed the acetate of copper, as an external application, with very decided success. This ointment was originally employed by an old woman, who, about thirty years ago, undertook to cure some very severe cases of herpes at that time in the hospital. Her treatment was completely successful, but she refused to divulge the nature of the ointment. It was, however, analyzed, and found to be composed of acetate of copper. Ever since that period the acetate of copper has been applied in like cases with uniform success.—*Lon. Med. Surg. Jour.*

---

*New Moxas.*—Two new moxas have been proposed, one by M. Ferrari, the other by Dr. Jacobsen of Copenhagen. The former is composed of cotton steeped in a saturated solution of the chlorate of potass, and divided into little cones, varying in size and consistence. The latter is formed of bands of paper, imbued with a solution of the chromate of potass. The one recommended by M. Ferrari is very active, while that by Dr. Jacobsen burns slowly and well, which, of course, prolongs its action. The most able French surgeons approve of the latter.—*Jour. de Phar.*

**Urine of Dyspeptics.**—Uric acid, first well described by Scheele, and now oftener called lithic acid, was supposed to be held pure, in solution, by the urine. It is, however, nearly insoluble when pure, but very soluble when in combination with ammonia; it forms lithate of ammonia, which, though nominally a neutral salt, still reddens litmus paper. This is the common deposit of the urine of dyspeptics. When this salt is decomposed in the human body, the presence of muriatic acid, muriate of ammonia, is formed, and lithic acid (red sand) is deposited. Nothing more contributes to this deposit, than errors in diet, intemperance and indolence. This red sand, somewhat modified, makes up a large portion of the chalk stones with which the bursæ and cellular membrane of gouty persons are afflicted. The formation or deposition of red sand may be prevented by the use of potash, soda, lime water, ammonia and magnesia, according to circumstances.—*Lon Med. Rev.*

**Nitrate of Silver in Leucorrhœa.**—Injections made with three grains of nitrate of silver to an ounce of distilled water are said to be very efficient in the cure of leucorrhœa; the strength of the injection must be gradually increased. A curved bone syringe is to be employed, in preference to the common pewter syringe, as the latter gives rise to decomposition. The patient should place herself in a recumbent posture, and should remain in that position several minutes after the syringe has been withdrawn. The nitrate of silver gives neither pain nor irritation, at least not more than is occasionally produced by the injection of common astringents.—*Ibid.*

*Errata.*—In the Meteorological Observations for May, in our last, for *Strambervia*, read *Ooster-via*; for *Armenica*, read *Armenia*.

Whole number of deaths in Boston for the week ending June 13, 26. Males, 13—Females, 13.

Of disease of the lungs, 1—convulsions, 1—lung fever, 1—consumption, 3—dropsy on the brain, 3—decline, 1—accidental, 1—dropsy, 2—typhous fever, 1—brain fever, 1—drowned, 3—croup, 1—unknown, 1—epilepsy, 1—inflammation of the bowels, 1—inflammation on the lungs, 1—sanker, 1—teething, 1—suicide, 1. Stillborn, 3.

#### ADVERTISEMENTS.

Two Subscribers continue to give instruction in the various branches of a Medical Education, to such students as may place themselves under their direction.

They have provided a room for the pupils, which will be open every day, Sundays excepted. A course of study is pointed out, the necessary books are furnished, and examinations are frequently made. Facilities are given for the cultivation of practical anatomy.

The terms are \$100 for a year, \$75 for six months, and \$50 for a quarter. All payments to be made in advance.

The students, in addition to the private instruction, have the privilege of attending, gratuitously, the Medical and Surgical Practice and the Surgical Operations of the Massachusetts General Hospital, and generally private Surgical operations, during the period of their pupillage; and they will also have free admission to the Lectures on Anatomy and Surgery, delivered at the Medical School of Harvard University. Clinical Lectures on Surgery are occasionally given.

Board, in respectable families in the city, may be had at three dollars a week.

JOHN C. WARREN,  
GEORGE HAYWARD,  
ENOCH HALE, JR.

Boston, May, 1834.

May 7. cop6t.

#### SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS.

An assortment of Surgical Instruments for sale at No. 35 Washington Street, five doors south of Cornhill, by A. F. RICHARDSON.

Surgical Instruments made and repaired as above. Orders forwarded will meet with punctual attention.

Feb 19

ep

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL is published every Wednesday, by D. CLAPP, JR., at 184 Washington Street, corner of Franklin Street, to whom all communications must be addressed, *post-paid*. It is also published in Monthly Parts, on the 1st of every month, each Part containing the weekly numbers of the preceding month, stitched in a cover.—Price \$3.00 a year in advance, \$3.50 after three months, and \$4.00 if not paid within the year.—Every seventh copy, *gratis*.—Postage the same as for a newspaper.